

Using music in your classroom

There are many ways to use Christian music apart from singing.

Some things you might try are:

- to use music to signal that the activity is about to change. Use lively music when you are about to start an active game, for example, and quiet meditative music when you are about to have prayer time. For a while you might use the same music for each occasion so the children know what they are to do.
- to play music as the children arrive to set the tone for your class.
- to play music at snack time.

Singing

There have been many songs written recently setting new words to familiar tunes. Even the most un-musical teacher can try these, as once you have taught the children the words, they will sing the song with little or no help from you. Playful Songs and Bible Stories for Preschoolers has more than 75 Bible stories and gives interesting ways to tell the stories and a song for each story sung to a very well known tune, such as 'Frere Jacques' and the 'Mulberry Bush.' It includes two CDs. Group, ISBN 0-7644-2534-X, about \$45.

Use songs to teach memory verses. The Godprints Younger and Older Elementary teachers' kits come with CDs that have many songs which set Bible verses to music. Unfortunately, the CDs are not available separately from the Teachers' Kits, which are 39.99 per quarter. Also available, from CRC Publications, is the booklet Worship Songs for Children, \$12.50, and accompanying tape, \$14.20, which contains 29 songs, many of them verses set to music. 13 of these songs are based on Old Testament verses or stories, which can be hard to find.

Diocesan Sunday School Workshop

Registration forms are now available for this event. Ask your clergy person for one or go to the Diocesan website, www.anglican.nb.ca, scroll down the side and click on Youth, then click on C.E. Director. You will find the archived Newsletters and Bulletin Inserts, and the registration form. There are 2 pages which may be printed back to back.

Scripture Memorization

If you want to include some of this, but your curriculum does not suggest it, the book, Making Scripture Memory Fun might help. (Group, \$25.99, ISBN 0-7644-2065-8)

It has activities to assist memorization of 80 passages of scripture, and excellent indexes at the end, one by the scripture (in Biblical order), one by age level, and one multiple intelligence index, which groups activities under the headings musical, visual-spatial, interpersonal etc. It would be possible to find a verse suitable to fit with almost any lesson in your curriculum.

Helping the brain to work better

Use past experience - don't omit the section at the beginning of the week's lesson in most curricula, in which you 'set the stage' for what you are about to teach this week. Often you are asked to find out what the children already know about a topic and to move on from there. It is most important to connect new teaching with the already familiar. E.g. in a lesson about the miracle of the loaves and fishes, children might be asked to think about picnics they have been on and what they took with them. When teaching the story of Joseph and his brothers, children might think about times when they have been angry with or jealous of other siblings.

Create a rich environment - have maps, pictures, time lines etc. available to assist in your teaching. Add an appropriate song. Dress yourself in a Biblical costume, or dress one of the children up as a character in the story. If possible, have any foods mentioned in a story available to try.

Create a focus - before reading a story ask the children to see if they can find out something specific as you read. You might ask them to discover, for example, what kind of stew Jacob was cooking to make Esau so hungry? Or how Jacob tricked his father?

Job Description

Do you have a job description - as a Sunday School Superintendent or teacher? Even volunteers benefit from knowing exactly what is expected of them and what they can expect to receive in exchange. The Christian Education committee will be asking all those attending the Oct 2 Conference to bring copies of their job description, if they have one. We will then draft sample descriptions for the two positions mentioned above in the hope that the examples provided will help parishes to write their own.

Fathers' Day Fun

The teacher asked her class if anyone had a favourite hymn. "Oh, yes," said five year old Jason, "my Dad."